

E-ALERT is compiled based on a service we receive from the Department of State's Office of International Information Programs. We are sending it to alert you of the latest issues and debates in the United States.

It covers (1) U.S. Federal government documents, especially those from executive branch departments and those from the Congressional branch; (2) policy briefs from major private think tanks; (3) major reports from professional associations; and (4) articles.

Please contact the Information Resource Center if you have problem retrieving any of the documents listed. To cancel this service, please reply to the present message and type "unsubscribe" as the text of your message.

Title Index

- [Item#1](#) Russia's Syrian Intervention Gives the West a Chance to Re-Engage Turkey
- [Item#2](#) A Major Milestone for the Iran Nuclear Deal—but a Bumpy Road Ahead
- [Item#3](#) Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons: Proliferation and Security Issues
- [Item#4](#) A Window of Opportunity for Reforms in Vietnam
- [Item#5](#) Wanted: European Grand Strategy for War Against the Islamic State
- [Item#6](#) Defense Modernization Plans through the 2020s
- [Item#7](#) Long Arm of Chinese Censors Reach Across Borders
- [Item#8](#) Abe and Blair: Political Apologies, East and West
- [Item#9](#) The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP): In Brief
- [Item#10](#) China's Efforts to Expand the International Use of the Renminbi. Brookings Institution
- [Item#11](#) The G7 Climate Mandate and the Tragedy of Horizons
- [Item#12](#) Social Costs of Morbidity Impacts of Air Pollution

Special Issue on 2016 Presidential Campaign

- [Item#1](#) Republicans Prefer Blunt Talk About Islamic Extremism, Democrats Favor Caution
- [Item#2](#) Faith and the 2016 Campaign: GOP Candidates Seen as Religious – Except for Trump
- [Item#3](#) The 2016 Presidential Campaign – a News Event That's Hard to Miss

Item#4 Winners and Losers in International Trade: The Effects on U.S. Presidential Voting

Reports

Item#1

Russia's Syrian Intervention Gives the West a Chance to Re-Engage Turkey. YaleGlobal. Marc Grossman. February 11, 2016.

The bilateral relationship between Russia and Turkey shifted from strategic partnership to wariness in the course of a year as civil war in Syria intensified. The West has extended limited support to the rebels, including Kurds, while targeting the Islamic State terrorists. Turkey, bordering Syria, has sheltered 2 million refugees, but also targeted Kurdish troops who have been effective in battling the Islamic State. Russia has assisted the Assad regime while targeting some rebel strongholds. "Russia's actions, which should not surprise Ankara after the interventions in Crimea and Syria, should make Turks think twice about deals with Moscow," writes Marc Grossman. The West should engage in strategic planning with NATO member Turkey to shed dependence on Russia. Grossman urges bolstering Turkish military defenses and energy independence while expecting cooperation in the fight against ISIS. The West can also assist Turkey with a growing refugee crisis that is a legacy of the five-year civil war.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/russia%E2%80%99s-syrian-intervention-gives-west-chance-re-engage-turkey> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#2

A Major Milestone for the Iran Nuclear Deal—but a Bumpy Road Ahead. Brookings Institution. Robert Einhorn. January 22, 2016.

The Iran nuclear deal reached a major milestone when the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirmed that Iran had fulfilled key nuclear commitments. In response, the United States, European Union, and United Nations suspended or terminated nuclear-related sanctions that have devastated the Iranian economy. However, while the arrival of "Implementation Day" was deservedly celebrated by the Obama administration, the Iranian government, and the other parties that negotiated the deal, the road ahead for the agreement will likely be bumpy, according to the author.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2016/01/22-iran-nuclear-deal-implementation-what-lies-ahead-einhorn> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#3

Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons: Proliferation and Security Issues. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Paul K. Kerr and Mary Beth Nikitin. February 13, 2013.

Pakistan's nuclear arsenal probably consists of approximately 90-110 nuclear warheads, although it could be larger. Islamabad is producing fissile material, adding to related production facilities, and deploying additional delivery vehicles. These steps could enable Pakistan to undertake both quantitative and qualitative improvements to its nuclear arsenal. Whether and to what extent Pakistan's current expansion of its nuclear weapons-related facilities is a response to the 2008 U.S.-India nuclear cooperation agreement is unclear. Islamabad does not have a public, detailed nuclear doctrine, but its "minimum credible deterrent" is widely regarded as designed to dissuade India from taking military action against Pakistan. Pakistan has in recent years taken a number of steps to increase international confidence in the security of its nuclear arsenal.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/RL34248.pdf> [PDF format, 32 pages, 394.89 KB].

Item#4

A Window of Opportunity for Reforms in Vietnam. YaleGlobal. Dien Luong. February 4, 2016.

Vietnam has a long history of conflict with its large neighbor to the north, China. Conservative and incumbent Nguyen Phu Trong bested populist Nguyen Tan Dung in a contest for chief of the Vietnamese Communist Party. "Reforms will continue, albeit at a slower pace, as would increasingly closer ties with the United States," explains Luong. Likewise, he predicts, Vietnam's economic and foreign policies will not fundamentally change. Trong would be wise to listen to public opinion about an aggressive China. Vietnamese policymakers and citizens must likewise determine if the United States is a dependable partner – whether the United States might cut a deal with China, sidelining Vietnam, or should even consider confronting China over issues like the South China Sea. In the end, Luong concludes, a thorough public understanding of complex issues combined with public support is essential for the success of any nation's system of government.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/window-opportunity-reforms-vietnam> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#5

Wanted: European Grand Strategy for War Against the Islamic State. YaleGlobal. Joergen Oerstroem Moeller. February 2, 2016.

Leaders of the Islamic State impose a rigid and fundamentalist interpretation of Islam, maintaining that the religion does not condone Western values of democracy, individual freedom, economic globalization or education. Moeller urges Europe to develop a grand strategy to combat extremism by recognizing how the long history of the Middle East influences political agendas, intensifying a laser focus on collecting intelligence, and praising Muslim leaders who insist that Islamic State actions contradict the religious faith.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/wanted-european-grand-strategy-war-against-islamic-state> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#6

Defense Modernization Plans through the 2020s. Center for Strategic & International Studies. Todd Harrison. January 26, 2016.

Since the enactment of the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011, much attention has been paid to the near-term effects of budgetary constraints on national defense. What has received less attention are the looming budgetary challenges defense faces beyond the BCA budget caps and the Defense Department's five-year budget planning horizon. The report details the plans for major acquisition programs over the next fifteen years and explores the complicating factors that may make the situation more problematic for policymakers.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://csis.org/files/publication/160126_Harrison_DefenseModernization_Web.pdf [PDF format, 42 pages, 2.12 MB].

Item#7

Long Arm of Chinese Censors Reach Across Borders. YaleGlobal. Frank Ching. January 28, 2016.

The odd disappearances of five staff members of a Hong Kong book publisher raises questions about China's commitment to the "one country, two systems" arrangement with Hong Kong. One man was taken from Thailand, another from Hong Kong and three detained in China. Two are foreign nationals, and no charges have been filed. "By openly flouting its commitment to respect Hong Kong's political system and flagrantly violating Thailand's sovereignty, attempting to shut down publication of annoying books at the expense of its international reputation, China has demonstrated its deepening insecurity," writes journalist Frank Ching.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/publish-and-perish-long-arm-chinese-censors-reach-across-borders> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#8

Abe and Blair: Political Apologies, East and West. YaleGlobal. Joji Sakurai. January 26, 2016.

Globalized communications ensure that national wrongdoings do not go forgotten. Official apologies for past wrongs are strategic affairs, crafted for public scrutiny. Journalist Joji Sakurai explores the cultural nuances of recent public apologies by Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's for sex slavery involving Korean women associated with World War II and by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair for reliance on misleading intelligence for the 2003 invasion of Iraq: "Political calculation was seen as a factor in both cases – Abe sensing the benefits of closer ties with South Korea at a time of strategic peril, timely given Pyongyang's nuclear test just days later, and the former British prime minister hoping that saying sorry might help him avoid legal difficulty ahead of publication of the Chilcot inquiry into the Iraq War."

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/abe-and-blair-political-apologies-east-and-west> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#9

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP): In Brief. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Ian F. Fergusson et al. February 9, 2016.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is a proposed free trade agreement (FTA) among 12 Asia-Pacific countries, with both economic and strategic significance for the United States. If approved, it would be the largest FTA in which the United States participates. The 12 countries announced the conclusion of the TPP negotiations and released the text of the agreement in late 2015, after several years of ongoing talks. Trade ministers from the TPP countries signed the final agreement on February 4, 2016, but Congress would need to pass implementing legislation for the agreement to enter into force for the United States. Such legislation would be eligible to receive expedited legislative consideration under the recent grant of Trade Promotion Authority (TPA), P.L. 114-26, if Congress determines the Administration has advanced the TPA negotiating objectives, and met various notification and consultation requirements. TPP negotiating parties include Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States, and Vietnam.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R44278.pdf> [PDF format, 16 pages, 721.59 KB].

Item#10

China's Efforts to Expand the International Use of the Renminbi. Brookings Institution. Eswar Prasad. February 4,, 2016.

China's economy is now the second largest in the world and a key driver of global growth. Its currency, the renminbi (RMB), was only recently elevated to the status of an official reserve currency. The potential for the RMB to develop quickly into an international currency is not without historical precedent. However, any discussion of the RMB's ascendance might seem premature given that China has neither a flexible exchange rate nor an open capital account, once considered essential prerequisites for a country's currency to have a major role in global financial markets.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/reports/2016/02/04-china-international-use-renminbi-prasad/rmbreportfinal.pdf> [PDF format, 140 pages, 2.1 MB].

Item#11

The G7 Climate Mandate and the Tragedy of Horizons. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. David Livingston. February 4, 2016.

According to the report, the G7 must carry forward the mandate of wrestling the climate change tragedy of horizons toward a more constructive and less catastrophic denouement.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_263_Livingston_G7_Final.pdf [PDF format, 34 pages, 334.76 KB].

Item#12

Social Costs of Morbidity Impacts of Air Pollution. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Alistair Hunt et al. January 28, 2016.

Outdoor air pollution is a major determinant of health worldwide. The greatest public health effects are from increased mortality in adults. However, both PM and O₃ also cause a wide range of other, less serious, health outcomes; and there are effects on mortality and morbidity of other pollutants also, e.g. nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and sulphur dioxide (SO₂). These adverse health effects have economic consequences. The paper strives to inform the development of improved estimates of the social costs of human morbidity impacts resulting from outdoor air pollution in two components; namely to develop a core set of pollutant-health end-points to be covered when estimating the costs of morbidity, and to review current estimates of the cost of morbidity from air pollution.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/download/5jm55j7cq0lv.pdf?expires=1455040162&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=AEC3A96BA9CFA3FA10CE58A6356A046A> [PDF format, 78 pages, 1.36 MB].

Special Issue on 2016 Presidential Campaign

Item#1

Republicans Prefer Blunt Talk About Islamic Extremism, Democrats Favor Caution. Pew Research Center. February 3, 2016.

Half of Americans say the next president should be careful not to criticize Islam as a whole when speaking about Islamic extremists, while four-in-ten want the next president to speak bluntly about Islamic extremists even if the statements are critical of Islam as a whole. The survey finds that blunt talk is preferred by two-thirds of Republicans and those who lean toward the Republican Party (65%), while seven-in-ten Democrats and independents who lean Democratic express the opposite view, saying the next president should speak carefully about Islamic extremism so as not to criticize Islam as a whole.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://www.pewforum.org/files/2016/02/PF_2016-02-03_islam-politics_FINAL.pdf [PDF format, 24 pages, 783.40 KB].

Item#2

Faith and the 2016 Campaign: GOP Candidates Seen as Religious – Except for Trump. Pew Research Center. January 27, 2016.

The conventional wisdom in American politics has long been that someone who is not religious cannot be elected president of the United States. Most Americans have consistently said that it is important to them that the president have strong religious beliefs. The survey finds that being an atheist remains one of the biggest liabilities that a presidential candidate can have; fully half of American adults say they would be less likely to vote for a hypothetical presidential candidate who does not believe in God, while just 6% say they would be more likely to vote for a nonbeliever.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://www.pewforum.org/files/2016/01/PF_2016-01-27_religion-politics_FINAL.pdf [PDF format, 61 pages, 1.14 MB].

Item#3

The 2016 Presidential Campaign – a News Event That’s Hard to Miss. Pew Research Center. Jeffrey Gottfried et al. February 4, 2016.

News and information about the contentious 2016 presidential election is permeating the American public, according to the survey of 3,760 U.S. adults by Pew Research Center. About nine-in-ten U.S. adults (91%) learned about the election in the past week from at least one of 11 types of sources asked about, ranging from television to digital to radio to print. This is true even among younger Americans, as 83% of 18- to 29-year-olds report learning about the presidential election from at least one stream of information, according to the survey conducted Jan. 18-27, 2016, using Pew Research Center’s American Trends Panel.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://www.journalism.org/files/2016/02/PJ_2016.02.04_election-news_FINAL.pdf [PDF format, 23 pages, 707.1 KB].

Item#4

Winners and Losers in International Trade: The Effects on U.S. Presidential Voting. National Bureau of Economic Research. J. Bradford Jensen et al. January 2016.

The paper studies how international trade influences U.S. presidential elections. It expects the positive employment effects of expanding exports to increase support for the incumbent’s party, and job insecurity from import competition to diminish such support. Our national-level models show for the first time that increasing imports are associated with decreasing incumbent vote shares, and increasing exports correlate with increasing vote shares for incumbents. These effects are large and politically consequential. Incumbent parties are particularly vulnerable to losing votes in swing states with high concentrations of low-skilled manufacturing workers with increasing trade exposure.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.nber.org/papers/w21899.pdf> [PDF format, 71 pages, 963.5 KB].

Information Resource Center
Beijing American Center
Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy Beijing
Tel: (86-10) 6597-3242
Email: ircbeijing@state.gov
Web Site: <http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/irc.html>